FinalSTAFF SUMMARY OF MEETING

COMMITTEE ON JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON REDISTRICTING

Date:	02/26/2011		ATTENDANCE	
Time:	08:00 AM to 10:04 AM		Brophy	X
			Carroll	X
Place:	Loveland City Council Chambers		Coram	X
			Nikkel	X
This Meeting was called to order by			Pabon	X
	Senator Heath		Scheffel	X
			Schwartz	E
This Report was prepared by			Vigil	X
•	Christie Lee		Balmer	X
			Heath	X
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Bills Addressed:	Action Taken:	
Loveland Public Hearing	Witness Testimony and/or Committee Discussion Only	

08:00 AM -- Loveland Public Hearing

The committee was called to order by Senator Heath, Co-Chair.

Jeremiah Barry, Office of Legislative Legal Services, gave an overview of the redistricting process in Colorado. He talked about the creation of the Joint Select Committee on Redistricting and its charge. Mr. Barry explained the population shifts and what needs to occur in each district based on the 2010 census data:

- District 1 needs gain 56,418 people;
- District 2 needs to lose 15,348 people;
- District 3 needs to gain 12,271 people;
- District 4 needs to lose 6,584 people;
- District 5 needs to lose 7,445 people;
- District 6 needs to lose 79,356 people; and
- District 7 needs to gain 40,047 people.

Senator Heath asked the members of the committee to introduce themselves and indicate which districts they represent.

Travis Whipple, resident of Longmont, representing the Longmont 9.12 Tea Partym and himself, talked about the uniqueness of Longmont and its growth versus Boulder, despite the fact it sits in Boulder County. He also talked about the difference in the Hispanic population between Longmont and Boulder. Representative Balmer asked the witness in which district he would like to see Longmont. Mr. Whipple stated he would like to see it stay in Congressional District 4.

Rich Ball, representing himself, talked about the center of northern Colorado which he stated is located at I-25 and Highway 34 and listed the cities that are located in that area. He talked about Colorado State University (CSU) and the University of Northern (UNC) Colorado which are located in northern Colorado and said he does not want to see them in the same district as the University of Colorado (CU), located in Boulder. Representative Pabon asked about the Budweiser Center in Congressional District 4 and whether it pulls attendees from Boulder. Mr. Ball stated it does not.

Steve Moreno, the Weld County Clerk and Recorder, asked that Congressional District 4 stay whole and the way it is. Senator Brophy asked Mr. Moreno to clarify whither he would like to see Weld County stay whole within Congressional District 4.

Jeff Maxwell, resident of Larimer County, talked about the lack of health care providers in rural communities and the reliance of the rural population on Larimer and Weld county's health centers. He asked that these communities stay intact. Representative Pabon asked which areas he defines as rural. Mr. Maxwell explained that rural areas to him are any areas that are under served in health care.

Judy Bigger, a resident of Longmont, also a former resident of Fort Collins, explained that she drives to Boulder for work and talked about the differences between Longmont and Boulder. She said placing Longmont in Congressional District 2 would cause it to lose its identity and sense of community.

Mikel Whitney from Castle Rock, Colorado, representing Citizens for Congressional District 6, talked about the organization and suggested some changes to the current map. Representative Balmer asked about his comments regarding moving Greenwood Village out of Congressional District 6 and where he proposes it be placed. Mr. Whitney said it should join Congressional District 1, since it shares a community of interest of the Tech Center with it.

Mel Hilgenberg, a resident of Fort Collins, formerly from Denver, a graduate of UNC, distributed a handout of his testimony (Attachment A).

Daniel Martin, a resident of Longmont, Colorado, stated that Longmont is a cohesive community and asked that Longmont stay together in Congressional District 4.

Torsten Eckstein from Larimer County west of Fort Collins, explained that Congressional District 4 centers around northern I-25 and asked that the committee keep the existing communities in the district together. He talked about the benefits to businesses of having the same district. He also mentioned keeping the two major universities in Colorado in separate districts.

John Bigger from Longmont talked about the growth of Longmont and the strong Latino base located there. He mentioned that he also agrees that CSU and CU be kept in separate districts. He talked about the conflicts of interest that occurred in North Carolina where two major universities were placed in the same district.

2 Final

Gary Wockner from Fort Collins talked about the community of interest that encompasses Greeley, Longmont, Fort Collins, Loveland, and the northern I-25 corridor. He talked about the pressures on water in northern Colorado and other issues surrounding water. Mr. Wockner also discussed transportation issues facing northern Colorado, including a rail system.

Richard Lyons, a resident of Longmont, talked about his law firm that represents 24 local governments in Congressional District 4. He explained the history of transportation in northern Colorado, beginning with the wagon trails that tied the communities of Loveland, Longmont, and Fort Collins together. He talked about Longmont's tie to Congressional District 4's water. He explained that CSU has an extension office in Longmont and talked about a community college that is tied to Fort Collins as well. He closed asking that Longmont stay in the Congressional District 4. Representative Pabon asked about the partnership Mr. Lyons talked about regarding Poudre Valley Hospital versus Boulder Health Center. Representative Pabon asked about the local governments Mr. Lyons represents and the impact splitting them would have on representation in Congress. Mr. Lyons talked about federal grant money which is typically determined by congressional districts, and the fact that if one receives some, the others lose out.

Ed Haynes from Fort Collins discussed communities of interest and talked about CSU being a land grant agricultural college tied to an agricultural district. He talked about water projects that serve the eastern plains in Congressional District 4. Mr. Haynes explained that the district needs the smallest amount of change. He said he agreed with Rich Ball regarding communities of interest and keeping Congressional District 4 together.

Karen Pelzer, from Greeley, talked about the redistricting process 10 years ago and the splitting of Weld County.

Robert May, from Denver, talked about the importance of creating competition in Congressional District 1 and Congressional District 6, explaining that Congressional District 1 is always Democratic and Congressional District 6 is always Republican.

Katie Witt from Longmont, Colorado, a City Council member asked that Longmont stay together. She talked about issues with split communities having each representative believing they are taking care of the community when that isn't always the case. She offered some suggestions. Representative Pabon asked Ms. Witt to talk about the Frederick, Dacono, and Firestone area.

John Nicholas from Estes Park talked about the census statistics and Congressional District 4. He talked about Weld and Otero counties being split. He explained making those counties whole would make Congressional District 4 within 1,000 people of the ideal district number.

Penny Nikel, a resident of Longmont, explained that she has no representation due to gerrymandering. She asked that Longmont stay in Congressional District 4.

Hazel Gibson from Greeley, speaking on behalf of the League of Women Voters, stated that she appreciated the openness of the process. She expressed her concerns with the process being behind closed doors. She said she would like to see citizens represented on the committee.

Joe Perez, from Weld County, past chair of the Democrat party of Weld County, talked about Weld and Otero which are split and asked for the wholeness of Weld County.

3 Final

Representative Balmer allowed questions from the audience. Gary Morrison from Berthoud, asked whether plans are already being created. Representative Balmer explained that the software has not yet been provided to the members. Senator Carroll talked about Congressional District 4 being over in population, and asked the audience where it would lose people in Congressional District 4. John Nicholson, said he would unify Otero and Weld and lose all of Boulder. Ms. Witt talked about areas in southeast Colorado that could be lost. Mr. Marin asked the committee who oversees the final decision. Representative Balmer explained the legislative process, stating that a plan would go through the same process as a bill and would have to pass the House and Senate and be signed by the Governor. Senators Carroll and Heath weighed in on the issue as well.

Mr. Nicholas talked about unifying Weld County and leaving Longmont in Congressional District 4. He stated that if that happened, Congressional District 4 would have to lose everything south of Washington to Yuma Counties. Ray Nelson suggested bringing all of Weld into Congressional District 4, he talked about the I-70 corridor. Mr. Hilgenberg asked Representative Vigil what the major communities of his district are. Representative Pabon asked Mr. Hilgenberg whether the map he handed out is his proposal. Mr. Hilgenberg stated yes. A member of the audience asked what the trump card is, population or communities of interest. Representative Balmer explained that the districts will be down to one person per federal law. Mr. Whipple returned and asked about the comment that the population be down to one person. Senator Carroll commented on the population and the one person one vote per federal case law.

10:04 AM

The committee adjourned.

4 Final

"A MODEST PROPOSAL" for General Assembly & Congressional Reapportionment/Redistricting Mel Hilgenberg, melsways@juno.com, 303-757-4718

"Not a black or a white man, but the best man!" was the campaign slogan for Charles Evers when he ran for Mississippi governor in 1971. I think that this needs to be updated to "Not a Democrat or a Republican, but the best person to represent all of Colorado's interests in the U.S. Congress"

As a Hutchinson when asked if he felt betrayed by the U.S. Senate's failure to convict Clinton, said, "No, but I sure am disappointed." So far several people whom I respect on both sides of the aisle have not betrayed what I hope and believe is necessary for Congressional Re-districting, but I am certainly disappointed by no evidence of anything among them but a perceived desire to protect incumbency, party, self interest and turf!

On the reverse is a map which reflects what I think is the best way to accommodate 21st century realities as well as the criteria mandated by law and judicial review.

"In 1876, when admitted to statehood, Colorado was entitled to two United States senators, one congressman, and three presidential electors. The General Assembly, 1913, divided the state into four districts: First the City and County of Denver... The entire delegation was democratic." (From <u>History of Colorado.</u>)

Colorado's official census count is 4,301,261, up 31% from the 1990 total of 3,294,394. There are to be seven Congressional Districts in 2002 each consisting of 614,466 constituents plus or minus 5%.

- Districts must be as nearly equal in population as possible, with no more than a 5% deviation between the largest and the smallest.
- The plans must not deny to members of a racial, color, or language minority an equal opportunity to participate in the political process and to elect representatives of their choice.
- Of secondary importance are the preservation of county boundaries, the preservation of municipal lines and the formation of compact districts.
- The third level of importance is the preservation of communities of interest.
- ◆ The last and unofficial level which the Commission considered was the preservation of politically competitive districts. (From "Final Report of the Colorado Reapportionment Commission," April 1992)

Congressional re-districting follows the General Assembly process, but I believe that there is a need to pursue a plan which varies slightly from the state Constitutional criteria when we are considering Colorado's representation to and leadership of the U.S. Congress.

We must end the 1876 "Ponderosa Mentality" that says that as we add districts, all we need to do is to roll out the additional district(s) in the areas that have the greatest population growth. Why not allocate them on the basis of how our state interests can best be represented in Washington and how we can establish 21st not 19th century districts? "Narrow minded" "parochial" and "partisan" are synonyms for "Ponderosa Mentality".

I believe and hope that you will support the proposition that there should be four districts in the seven county metro area, one in Pueblo and El Paso, one eastern plains and one western slope.

I believe that the four metro districts should go north to south, cutting across the seven metro counties. There would be one west metro district in Boulder/Jefferson/Broomfield, a west and east central Denver district going into Douglas and Adams, and an east metro district predominantly Arapahoe County.

Based upon the way that the population has distributed, the ethnic make up and the history and genesis of the metro area, it is not only doable, but has the potential to provide seven districts which would be competitive and would require candidates to run on issues not partisan advantages, assuring that Coloradoans would have the best representatives of Colorado's interests, not just Denver's or some other region's.

November 8, 2001 (Over for Map.)



